

Press Room



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 1, 2004

CONTACT: Mike Marando, OTS
(916) 262-2975
Tom Marshall, CHP
(916) 657-7202

WHO WILL YOU BE THIS HOLIDAY SEASON?

By Sunne Wright McPeak
Secretary, Business, Transportation and Housing Agency

With holiday celebrations in full swing, I ask you, "Who will you be this holiday season?"

Will you be the person who has a few drinks at the office holiday party and says, "I'm fine to drive home, it's just a few blocks away." Or, maybe you'll be the person that has a few beers at a local bar, but never stops to think how you will get home.

As you celebrate this holiday season, you may not be thinking about the consequences of drinking and driving, but what you didn't count on are the thousands of law enforcement officers that will be thinking about you.

After more than a decade of decline, alcohol-related fatalities have increased in California for the fifth consecutive year. But California's enforcers are fighting back. In 2003, DUI arrests rose nearly four percent, taking an additional 6,000 drunk drivers off the road.

In addition, this December the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the Business, Transportation and Housing Agency, will allocate more than \$4.7 million in grants to police departments throughout the state to conduct sobriety checkpoints during peak holiday periods. The funding will enable 155 agencies to put thousands of officers on the state's roadways to identify and arrest DUI offenders.

Nothing brings the cheer of the holiday season to a screeching halt faster than a DUI arrest or collision. Yet, many California partygoers are still making the mistake of getting behind the wheel after consuming alcohol, putting themselves and other motorists at risk.

The holidays are meant to be the happiest time of the year. Families and friends are supposed to remember what's important in life. For many, alcohol is an integral part of celebrating. The decision to drink is a personal one. The decision to drive and drive is not.

Don't let a DUI crash your holiday party. Call a taxi. Designated a driver. Invite family and friends to stay the night if they've been drinking. Don't be the person that ruins the holidays for your loved ones by ending up in the back of a patrol car or ambulance because you chose to drink and drive.

This holiday season, be the person that celebrates responsibly and makes it home safely.